### THE COGNAC VINTAGE.

A BAD YEAR FOR BRANDY. THE GRAPE COOP AN ALMOST TOTAL FAILURE-A PRITURE OF THE FRENCH PEASANT-SPUR.OUS

BEANDY-A BINT TO BUYERS. FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.) Cognac, Nov. 27.-This is Thanksgiving Day away off in the States, a festival of which these dwellers in the Charente probably never heard. If you were to ask them this year to assemble and thank God for the harvest and the fatness of the land, they would look incredulous, shake their heads, and walk off whistling. For now that the vintage season of 1879 is over, there is no longer room for doubting what had before been all but a certainty-that their year's brandy crop an tically nothing; in short, that in Cognac annals the year 1879 may be regarded as an année perdue. A severe frost came at the last moment and snapped up what few grapes had managed to survive the phylloxera and the rains.

Coming down here on the cars the other morning. from Angoulême, I heard nothing from the peasants, men and women, who got in and out at the various stations, but one continuous jeremiad about their vineyards. They all know each other, these peasants, and the affable volubility with which they ask about each other's sisters and cousins and aunts is invariably supplemented by an inquiry after the health of the crops. This year it is the same pitiful story with them all. They are desoles; last year they made fifty or a hundred barrels where this year they make only one or two, and a very poor quality at that. And when one comes to reflect that the grape forms the wealth of this section, it is not difficult to understand that the failure of a single year's crop leaves more or less of a void in every one's exchequer, and necessitates a general curtailment of expenditure on the part of proprietor and peasant alike. Many a Charente lady will be obliged to forego her accustomed trip to Paris this Winter, or her stay at the Canx next Summer, and many a light-hearted country girl will have to return bome from the fair next season disconsolate for the want of the usual ribbons and gew-gays—all simply because there were ne grapes on the vines during the golden month of October, 1879. It was indeed a golden month. As if in mockery the rain-clouds had departed, leaving a bright blue sky, a bracing air, and a landscape cov-ered with russet hues that vividly recalled an American Autumn. But the harm was done and past recall; and now if you ask any of these same disappointed wine-growers what they are going to do about it, the grand thrift and hopefulness of the French character shine out in their faces as they answer, "Oh! we shall have to economize a little more this year and make a double crop next season, that's all."

These blue-bloused fathers and white-bonne mothers of peasant families will live, thrive and ney where an ordinary American farmer's household would starve to death or take refuge in the poorhouse. Their villages are duller than a Quaker meeting-house in the backwoods of Indiana; their houses are cold, bare and cheerless; their barnyards dirty and reeking, and their daily life is so utterly stupid and uneventful that an existence in any remote American Smithvil'e or Podunk would be a whirlwind of excitement com-pared to it. Were I compeiled to choose between a fortnight's sojourn in St. Xandre or Dompierre and a whole year's exile in the quietest hamlet Connecticut boasts, I should unhesitatingly choose the

"Better fifty weeks in Yankdom, than a fort-night in Matha." All that a French peasant lives for may be summed up in the three words " to save money." He is hard-headed, avaricious, pitilessly practical. He is crafty, cautious and conservative. I am sorry I cannot give him a better character, but habit and tradition have made him a simple machine, callous at heart, utterly devoid of sentiment and feeling. His morals, in practice at least, are as rigidly correct as any puritan's, for he knows very well that immorality is apt in the long run to prove expensive. He pays religiously and punctually every son he agrees to pay; he exacts with equal rigor and punctuality every centime that is coming to him. He never goes over twenty miles away from home during the whole course of his life, unless it happen that military service calls him with other conscripts to some distant town. As for politics, what does he care for Empire, Monarchy or Republic? Each of them, he says, makes him pay the same taxes, and do the same military service-Qa'importe. It is a hard, cut and dried existence he leads y ar in and year out, yet he never complains so long as each passing day sees a fifty-centime piece added to his miser stores. He glories in his blue blouse, such as his father and grandfather wore before him, and his sons will wear after him. He lives to a green old age; he n up to almost the last days of his long, laborious life, and then some fine day, followed by a

double-file of other peasants in blouses and bonners, he is carried into the village church, which probably saw him only too seldom during his lifetime, a few prayers are mumbled over him, and he is laid to sleep beside his progenitors in the country church-yard.

I like to study these French peasants, for their lives and methods tell the whole story of the contantly increasing wealth and prospenity of France. But this year's failure is like a bombsnell in their midst, compelling them. as it does, to economize more closely than before—if that were possible—and even to fail back upon their little hoardings of previous years for their own and their annihes' minimaner. I do not think that any of the published accounts have exagerated the extent of the disternance. I do not think that any of the published accounts have exagerated the extent of the disternance of the recognized oran of vine-grawing interests, has published what the mass be a grawing interest, has published what the mass be a grawing interest, has published what the mass be a grawing interest, has published with the mass be a grawing in the rest of the wine crops. The mass he a grawing in the rest of the wine crops the renders it says, and I think year over 1,500,000 heefolitres of wine, as comparted with nearly 7,000,000 in 1878. I asked a compart of the published will not make this year over 1,500,000 heefolitres of wine, as comparty, but more particularly the alcoholic densities of the published will not make the properties of this year, which necessarily depends on the wine crop, would amount to. His reply was "practically mil." His not only the quarty, but more particularly the alcoholic density of the brandy-rankers.

His reply was "practically mil." His not only the graw of the properties of the vines there is less brandy as a resultant than in other years when the vines lack grapes, but the grapes, such as there are years, for instance, when even with an increased productiveness of the vines there is less brandy as a resultant than in other y

to pay for it, and who have a care to order it from honorable and trustworthy dealers.

LITERARY NOTES.

Burns's poetical works have been issued by Macmillan & Co. in two handsome volumes, printed from the Golden Treasury plates on hand-made papers with the edges uncut. Matthew Arnold's selections with the edges unout. Matthew Arnold's selections from Wordsworth and Mr. Arnold's own selected poems have also been published in this form for those who have a fancy for out-of-the-way and rare editions. Only 500 copies of the "Burns" have been printed. The American branch of this firm has just issued a supplement to its general catalogue, contaming a list of books recently published, which includes many of the best of late English works in almost every department of knowledge.

Geike's "Life of Christ," in the new one volume edition at the American Book Exchange, com prises something over 800 pages, and is sold for 50 cents. It is understood that Dr. Geike has never received any return from the very large sales of his book in this country, so that this new and cheap that there is, after all, such a thing as retributive; in this world. The publishers have already exhausted their first supply of this edition and have anothe under way. Volume III is ready of their "Library of Universal Knowledge," which brings the work down to the word "Caterpillar," and the first volume of the American additions, which will comprise the last six volumes, has gone to press.

Of Milton's reply to "Eikon Basilike" Mark Pattison, of Oxford, in his new volume on Milton (Harwas in "a tone of rude railing and insolent swagger," which at any time would have been unbecoming, but appearing when it did was "greesly indecent." Mr. Pattison, remarking upon the meagre records which are left of the lives of poets and dramatists of the seven-teenth century, cites that of Milton more personal de-In the present generation all that printed books or writ-ten documents have preserved about him has been brought together in Masson's Life of him, which is " the brought together in Masson's Life of Mill. According to most exhaustive biography that ever was compiled of any Englishman." The work comprises six octavo volumes, with a total of four or five thousand pages. Mr. Puttison's excuse for thus coming after the king is that he writes for readers who cannot afford to know more of Millon than can be told in some 250 pages.

Few letters from Carlyle have as yet reached the public eye. Maevey Napier's correspondence brought Choice of Books " contains a few others, and there are two or three in Mr. Page's volume on De Quincey. In Edinburgh has just appeared a collection of Covenanter lays in which a few others are given. One of them may well be called characteristic. It is addressed to some triend who had solicited Carlyie's interest in behalf of a consin that was ambitious of a place among writers for periodical literature. Carlyle says: "There is no madder section of human business now weltering under the sun than that of periodical literature in England at this day. The meagrest bread-and-water wages at any hon est, steady occupation, I should say, are preferable for a young man, especially for an ambitious, excitable young man. I mistake much if your cousin were not wise to stick steadfastly by his law and what benefits it will yield him; studying of course, in all ways, to perfect and cultivate himself, but leaving all literary glory, etc., etc., to lie in the distance, an obscure possibility of the future, which he might attain, perhaps, but also could do very well without attaining. In another year, it seems, his official salary may be expected to increase into something tolerable; he has his mother and loved ones within reach; he has, or by dilicence can and have, some books worth reading; his own free heart is within him, to shape into humble wisdom, or mar into violent madness; God's great sky is over him, God's green, peaceable earth around him. I really know not that he ought to be in haste to quit such arrangements. Nevertheless, if he persist in the purpose to write, which in my ignorance of the details of his situation I know in my ignorance of the details of his situation I know not that he should absolutely avoid doing, let him by all means try it. If he turn out to have the fit talent, he will decadedly find an editor; if not, it is better in all ways that he do not find one. They [the editor] will make short work of the business, and answer truly, This thing seems fit for us; this thing seems not fit! That is all they will answer. In conclusion. I should say that your cousin ought decidedly to try for some other subject to start with than criticism on Shakespeare. Doubtless he must know best what he has the call to write upon, if he have really an inward call. But the thing he will have the chance to write entertainingly upon will be something he specially himself has seen, not probably Shakespeare, I should say, white all the world these two centuries has been doing its best to see. Excuse this abruptness. Heaven knows I would gladly help your cousin, if I could."

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